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# WHAT IS HOLDING UP THE REVOLUTION?

What has held up the Revolution in Europe? At the outset of the war - in fact prior to it - the Revolutionary Workers League stated that the "war would end in Revolution". We were emphatic in pointing out that imperialist war can be ended finally only by the destruction of capitalism and that the militarists could be dissuaded from continuance of the military conflict only when the danger of social revolution begins to threaten the very structure of capitalism itself.

These statements were incomplete and entirely misleading. From the point of view of tempo they are obviously wrong. History has introduced a corrective into our thinking which - as sincere Marxists - we must take cognizance of. We must restate the mechanical position of the past in terms of a more fluid and dynamic approach to the problem.

Capitalism can not resolve its problems by war or any other means. Victory in war merely means that one power has gained a respite at the expense of another or other powers, from the final eclipse of the capitalist system. It means that as a result of the markets for investment and export that have been stolen from other powers the victorious nation can stave off a revolutionary situation for some time. The antagonism between capitalist powers, however, while it is severe and serious, is necessarily subordinated to the struggle between classes, to the antagonism between capitalism as a whole versus the world proletarian revolution. No nation can risk war in the face of an impending revolution at home. No nation can continue war in the course of a revolution at home.

Generally and abstractly speaking it is therefore correct to say that only revolution can end war. It is also correct to point out that by and large modern war is so exhaustive to the internal economic structure of all powers that it brings on a crisis within every nation. That is precisely what happened in world war I. Let us review that war for a few moments, to understand the relationship between imperialist war, on the one hand and revolution on the other.

## TWO WORLD WARS.

A general crisis existed in Europe in 1913, but not yet a revolutionary situation. The war delayed the development of the revolution and temporarily acted as a stimulant to the battered economies of Europe. However as the catastrophe continued one nation after another became exhausted. The plight of the masses was accelerated. General strikes broke out in a number of major cities in 1916, and in 1917 a full fledged revolution occurred in Russia. The victory of the October Revolution in turn hastened the deterioration of the armies and economies of Europe, particularly in the camp of the Central Powers. General strikes occurred in January 1918 in Berlin, Vienna and other large cities. At the time the German General Ludendorf, in charge of the armies in the field, begged the Kaiser to sue for an "honorable" peace. Finally in November the revolt of the sailors at Kiel forced the Kaiser to change his mind and capitulate to the allied powers.

The end of the war, however, witnessed the continuation of the revolutionary crisis. Revolution broke out throughout central Europe and the masses in Turkey and Asia started on the first lap toward emancipation in the east. The major powers, however, were unable to intervene effectively in the situation. Mutinies in their armies, vast strike struggles and here and there the organization of rudimentary soviets (including one in Seattle, Washington) stayed the hand of the giant imperialists and made it necessary for them to rely on the troops of puppet nations such as Czechoslovakia and Rumania as the main force to fight revolution in Europe. The Revolutionary wave threatened to engulf all of Europe. From 1917 to 1922 it involved Russia, Finland, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, Italy, the Baltic countries and others. Repercussions of such struggles were felt in France and England to such an extent that vast expeditionary forces against these social upheavals were impossible. The counter-revolution had to content itself with financial and covert aid to the reaction in the various countries consumed by revolution. The war had truly exhausted the whole capitalist world and almost hurtled it into the lap of the proletarian revolution. Without the aid of the Second International (and to a lesser extent the mistakes of some of Lenin's adherents such as Béla Kun) the capitalist system could not have stabilized itself.

The experience of the second world carnage is somewhat different. In the very first days of the war the class war reached a high level. Workers in Warsaw took over administration of the city and its defense in the face of the cowardly and treacherous flight of the Polish government and military caste. Guerrilla movements became numerous throughout Europe and actually succeeded in many instances (Paris, Athens) in driving the Nazis out of big cities. Unfortunately these movements which catered to the aspirations of the masses for land and freedom were under the leadership of agents of the Allied imperialist powers. The capitulation of France was occasioned in large measure by the fear of revolution in France. Many strikes developed in Denmark, Brussels, France and other spots during the war. The masses forced Mussolini out of power in 1943 and the beginnings of revolution repeatedly stirred in India. Civil war broke out in Greece. The class war never ended.

It did not however attain the proportions of the class war in 1917. Nowhere in Europe, for instance, were stable Soviets established. Workers in Italy seized towns (and are still doing so) and factories, but no Soviets are being formed of a dual power nature as yet. More workers possess arms in Europe today than at any time in history, and presumably those workers will be banded into action against the imperialist and home capitalist oppressors in the near future. But as yet these masses function where they do function merely on a guerrilla basis. They are not formed into open armed forces of an offensive-minded proletariat.

The war, in other words, was not ended by revolution (although the danger of it played some role), as much as by a complete and shattering military victory by the allied powers. Furthermore, since the end of the war there has been sort of a "sitzkrieg" in the development of the revolution.

This difference between the two wars is not fundamental. Quite obviously the forces moving toward revolution are developing in the direction of engulfing the whole capitalist world. The showdown between communism and capitalism is merely delayed for a while; it is definitely not eliminated as many simple-minded people believe. The difference is therefore one purely of tempo.

#### TWO POINTS OF DIFFERENCE

In that respect it must be frankly admitted that the prognosis of the Revolutionary Workers League failed to take into account two factors that vitally affect tempo:

- 1- The overwhelming and complete victory of American Imperialism, which has since acted as a bulwark to prop up the whole system (UNRRA, loans, investments, gifts, military aid and policing). Not since Roman days has a nation gained so towering a victory. Far from being exhausted American economy was stronger by far at the end of the war than at its outset (although, of course, the seeds of decay are working within the system and preparing for a grand crisis).
- 2- The treacherous role of Stalinism which was a far more effective weapon for the counter-revolution in this war than social-democracy (which aspired, let it be noted to equal treachery) in the first cataclysm. Stalinism survived the war. The seeds of important class struggles are undoubtedly present within the Soviet Union and some of it leaks through the censorship; but here too the RWL was wrong on time tempo. Stalinism survived longer than anticipated. (On this subject other articles are being prepared for the INTERNATIONAL NEWS).
- The victory of the United States staggers the imagination. Profits for the capitalists jumped to three times the level of the best year in history, 1929 - from 9 billions to 25 billions. Since the war they have gone up some more. American exports abroad tripled - from a monthly average of \$244 millions in 1936-38 to \$741 millions in April 1946. That does not include the exports of Canada, largely owned by American capital, which rose from \$77 million to \$106 million in the same period. American trade to India rose from \$77 million in 1949 to \$454 million in 1945. American investments in Great Britain rose to just about double what they were prior to the war. The United States forged ahead into one British market after another. She achieved parity with John Bull by gaining a joint oil monopoly in Italy. She displaced England completely as the world financier with billions of investments in China, India, Australia, Africa, Latin America and elsewhere. In the most practical sense America has conquered the world.

She has destroyed economically four of her six rivals, Italy, Japan, Germany and France; and she has relegated to a subordinate position her greatest economic rival, Great Britain. Of the total of \$1,733 millions in exports in the whole world in March the United States percentage was approximately 46%.

The strength of the large corporations in the United States grew immeasurably greater. The 63 largest corporations now have approximately \$100 million dollars assets apiece, or more than the total held by all manufacturing companies in 1939. These 63 corporations now have the equivalent in wealth of 72,000 small corporations who represent about 94% of the total manufacturing corporations in the U.S. The United States was completely untouched by bombs or any real depression during the war. The upper crust of the population - 10% - saved an average of \$10,500 apiece during the war. Stocks rose from an index of 78.0 in 1941, a good year, to 140.1 this year. It is quite obvious to everyone that no major industrial changes throughout the world are taking place without American capital.

Put into political terminology the difference between world war I and world war II resolves itself into this:

FAILURE OF THE MASSES, PARTICULARLY IN THE UNITED STATES, TO SUFFICIENTLY UNDERMINE THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM DURING THE WAR BY THE STRATEGY OF REVOLUTIONARY DEFEATISM HAS MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR ONE OF THE MAJOR POWERS TO COME OUT OF THE STRUGGLE SO STRONG THAT IT IS ABLE TO TEMPORARILY CARRY THE REST OF THE WORLD ON ITS BACK IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST REVOLUTION.

#### U.S. PROPS UP CAPITALISM

Let no one be confused by this statement into fatalism. The war occurred when it did only because the revolution in Spain and the threat of revolution in France were

pushed into the background. The war crisis, however, offered new opportunities for class struggle, particularly in the U.S. with its highly integrated economy. The "Communist" Party, with its control over such Unions as the CIO electrical, maritime farm equipment, and other Unions could have, with correct strategy, created a major stumbling bloc to the imperialist war. Stalinism, however, did just the opposite. It was the most militant force in defense of Wall Street's war.

The combined imperialist wisdom of Franklin Roosevelt, who carefully prepared the class peace in the United States for 9 years, and the treachery of the reformists, made possible the present favorable position for the counter-revolution in Europe.

THE STRENGTH OF AMERICAN CAPITALISM IS TODAY THE MAJOR OBSTACLE TO REVOLUTION. IT HAS CREATED A TEMPORARY - BUT ILLUSORY - LULL IN THE WORLD CLASS WAR. It has created in the minds of political simpletons the same type of thinking that surrounded the sitzkrieg on the western front in 1939-40 ("this war will be different, it won't be so bloody").

The fate of the revolution IN THIS HIGHLY INTEGRATED WORLD is obviously linked to the fate of American imperialism. Failure to visualize the possibility of such an overwhelming victory on the part of Wall Street - mechanical thinking that ALL powers would be exhausted on a relatively equal basis, rather than on the very unequal basis that actually occurred - led to our error on the question of the tempo of the revolution. But it did not and cannot eliminate the revolutionary flare-up which is imminent in the present situation and which is merely awaiting the development of the crisis in the U.S. and the weakening of America's counter-revolutionary potential.

#### DEMORALIZATION

In the ranks of all movements the failure of the European revolution to develop has played major havoc, both politically and organizationally. Trotskyism, for instance, has further cemented its weding to bourgeois democracy following the end of hostilities, by support to the British Labor Party, by the demand for Stalinist-Socialist governments in Europe, etc. Many organizations have just ceased to function. Others are merely putting forth left "democratic" panaceas.

The RWL has not been free of this process. In our ranks has been manifested two revisionist tendencies - seemingly opposites, but in reality two sides of the same political demoralization and lack of faith in the development of the revolution. On the one hand a Marlenist study-circle tendency developed, which called for no work in the class struggle "in this period" but study and polemics against opponent groups, particularly Stalinism. On the other hand an "Economist" tendency reminiscent of Stamm in 1938-40, which has made activity on a pure and simple low-level trade-union basis the axis of its orientation. This second tendency operates that we must go no further than the present workers' level and that to deal with such problems as depression, impending war, opponents theory, etc. is vastly subordinate to the problem of "activity".

The various types of demoralization in the camp of the revolutionists stem precisely from the revolutionary "sitzkrieg". Had the Marxists anticipated such a development the tide of demoralization would have been held back somewhat. But so ~~of~~ it is inevitable, just as there was an inevitable movement away from Marxism particularly in the camp of German emigres when the Nazi legions swept over Europe.

The overall picture is fortunately not nearly so black as is visualized. A depression in the United States within the next period is inevitable. Real wages, accord-

ing to the National Association of Manufacturers, were 9.3% lower in August of this year than in the same period last year - despite a boost in money wages. Henry Wallace in his Labor Day speech predicted a depression in "less than a year". The stockmarket has been indicating a sharp break in the near future. The inflationary price situation is building up to major strike struggles at the turn of the year. Partial recovery of nations in Europe and Asia will cut into American exports and aggravate the situation.

The revolution in Europe has been delayed. But when it comes it will develop with greater fury than any revolutionary wave in history. Just as the war "sitzkrieg" was a prelude to the most devastating blood-bath in all history, so the "sitzkrieg" in the class war is a prelude to the most sharpened revolutionary wave in history. In the last analysis, economics determines the character and depth of war as well as revolution. The capitalist world today is more unstable fundamentally than in the past. It must succumb in the near future - possibly in months - to a wave of revolution which will eclipse in intensity the 1917-23 period.

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## NOTE

Comrades in Europe are asked to please note that Jack Armour has been representing himself as a delegate of the Revolutionary Workers League and the International Contact Commission to various groups and individuals. This is completely false. Armour represents no one but himself, and certainly does not represent our organization.

Because of the dislocations caused by the imperialist war, we ask all foreign comrades to acknowledge receipt of International News

# THE SOVIET UNION TODAY

Many people would like to forget the Soviet Union because it is such a difficult problem to understand. Its continued existence is difficult for the capitalists to explain. It is a constant thorn in the side of the labor agents of the capitalists in the ranks of labor. It is the nightmare of every reformist and centrist. It is the deepest mystery for the liberals. If the Russian question is left out of any well laid plan, the plan becomes unworkable. If the Russian question is incorporated falsely in any plan, the plan won't last long.

The complexity of the Russian question can not be brought to the surface by labels attached to it by outstanding writers of the different tendencies in the political movements. While all of these writers place the label of capitalism on the economy within the United States; all of these writers disagree as to what kind of economy we have in the Soviet Union. Some say it is socialist (communist), others say it is capitalist, still others won't even label it; while the Marxists call it transition economy between capitalism and socialism. Its development since the revolution is a bed of quicksand for every false economic, political and social theory of the bourgeois and reformists.

## NEW WORLD POSITION

Some people with the best of intentions, but with the worst possible understanding of the problem, don't seem to realize the new position the Soviet Union holds within world politics. A comparison of the world position of the Soviet Union after the first world war and after the second world war will throw some light upon the problem.

In the first world war only the United States and Japan emerged as nations that gained from the war. In the second world war only the United States and the Soviet Union came through the destruction with any gains.

In the first world war Russia as one of the allied nations was defeated by Germany. In the second world war France was one of the allies defeated by Germany.

Germany defeated Russia in the first world war, but the Soviet Union was one of the main contributors to the defeat of Germany in the second world war. The Red Armies marched into Berlin in the second world war instead of the fascist armies marching into Moscow and Leningrad.

After the first world war the Soviet Union was surrounded by the following victorious capitalist nations: The United States, Great Britain, Japan, France and Italy. After the second world war the Soviet Union is surrounded only by two victorious capitalist nations, one weak and one strong--the British empire in decline and the powerful American imperialists. In this situation the Anglo-American imperialists are trying to revive the defeated nations (France, Italy, Germany, Japan, etc.) to be used against the social revolutions and the Soviet Union.

After the first world war the Red Army had to fight intervention on 21 fronts and lost considerable territory to the imperialists. But after the second world war the capitalists are in no position to carry on direct intervention now and the Soviet Union has extended its border and influence far beyond the boundaries laid down by the first world war.

After the first world war capitalist armies and white-guardist armies were fighting everywhere within Russia. Today the Soviet Army has a front line from the river Elbe in Europe to Port Arthur in Asia.

There are other factors just as important but this will be sufficient to reveal the entirely different relation of forces on a world scale and the new position of the Soviet Union within the world structure.

After the first world war anti-soviet nations surrounded the Soviet Union; today Stalinist puppet nations surround the Soviet Union. This is not the best situation but it is not as bad as it was before.

#### 1939 AND 1946

It is well to also consider the relation of forces in 1939 when the second world war started and now when it is over.

In 1939 there existed the three Axis partners of Germany, Italy and Japan, powerful forces of reaction. And there existed the United States, England and France, all three also having powerful fascist forces within. Today, after the war fascism was not defeated but the three axis nations were defeated and France was defeated and England is far weaker than she was. This has altered the relation of forces on a world scale considerably and the role played by the small capitalist nations as pawns of the big powers.

With this background and this understanding kept in mind the problems of today can be analyzed with far greater clarity and the moves of the imperialists on the one hand and the Stalinists on the other hand can be stripped of their propaganda coverings and seen for what they are really worth. With these above factors in mind let us take up some of the present day problems confronting the Soviet Union.

#### SACRIFICE REVOLUTION

In the first place the policy of Stalinism is warped and negative because they have replaced internationalism with nationalism; Marxism with reformism; and the extension of the October Revolution with the theory of socialism in one country. This policy for Russia leads to disaster in the final analysis no matter how much success it has momentarily. One of the ultimate results is the Kremlin line of placing the national interests of Russia above the interests of the workers in other countries where Stalinism is strong enough to effectively help solve the crisis within these countries if Stalinism would use proper Marxian steps. Prior to the war and since the war revolutionary situations have been sacrificed for national Russian interests. Likewise, in the puppet government countries of eastern Europe the Stalinists sacrifice the workers' interests in favor of the supposed interests of the Soviet union, thereby weakening rather than strengthening the final victory over capitalism. The Stalinists will reply that the main defense is the Soviet Union. And we will answer that this is correct. The dispute is not over this aspect of the question. The dispute is over the question of How to most effectively defend the Soviet Union and to extend the revolution. The international policy as opposed to the nationalist stalinist policy is the most effective in the long run.

Flowing from their nationalist Russian policy the Stalinists are forced to compromise in the capitalist countries. And they follow the same false path to national patriotism. During the war the Stalinists' patriotic position in the United States etc., revealed this to the hilt. But in the countries of eastern Europe where the Stalinists have the Soviet Army and are more powerful, their policy takes on the

form of Russian nationalism at the expense of the workers of these countries. If an international Marxian policy were adopted within the eastern European countries (to say nothing about the world at large) the majority of the population would be won over with great enthusiasm for the social revolution and the defense of the Soviet Union.

But bureaucrats cannot be reformed; they must be removed. The Stalinists' bureaucratic handling of the Russian workers and peasants leave them no alternative; they know of no other way than the bureaucratic way to handle the workers and peasants of the countries they dominate in eastern Europe. In fact they fear democracy for the workers and peasants as much as they fear democracy for the exploiters. This nationalist policy and their bureaucratic education results in as much dictatorship against the workers as against the exploiters. Only when a working class leadership can distinguish and separate the opposites of dictatorship against the exploiters and democracy for the exploited can there be genuine results. On this Marxian basis no iron curtain is needed against the yellow journalists of the capitalist nations; the genuine democracy among the masses is a thousand times stronger than an iron curtain.

#### AUSTRIAN DEBACLE

The Stalinist policy in Austria reached a new low level of Russian nationalism when they allowed the American representatives to outmaneuver them and put them in the corner. The American representatives asked for the nationalization of almost all the important industries of Austria; while the Stalinists were placed in the position of veto--in order that they may obtain great quantities of reparation. American statesmen tried to prevent this and to keep this wealth in Austria. A Marxist would counter the American move, not with nationalism which robs the nation of its wealth and at that a nation subjugated by Hitler and forced into war. They would counter this American move by nationalization of industries under WORKERS CONTROL OF PRODUCTION. This would place the capitalist Americans in the most embarrassing position possible and could be used as a lever on the road to power. But Stalinism is incapable of such progress. Just like Green, Woll, Lewis and the other labor fakers fear the workers more than they fear the capitalists, and cannot allow democracy in their unions, so too, Stalinism fears the workers and their democracy and cannot allow workers control of production.

#### UNITED STATES OF EUROPE

Or take the latest speech of Churchill at Zurich when he advocated the modern version of the old capitalist United States of Europe. Naturally the set-up Churchill proposed with France and Germany as leaders (under Anglo-American domination) was a move against the Soviet Union and against the policy of the Russians in eastern Europe, to say nothing of the Stalinist parties in western Europe. The Stalinists did not know how to reply to this. Their false nationalist, non-Marxian policy and false policy in eastern Europe kept them tongue-tied. Marxists would counter this reactionary Churchill proposal cloaked in liberal form by proposing the Socialist United States of Europe. The section of Europe under Soviet domination already has over 100 million people, a third of the population of Europe, and even if necessary to resort to a vote in all the countries of Europe the workers under a GENUINE workers united front with Stalinists as part of it could muster the majority vote for such a socialist plan vs. the Churchill plan. It would be an ideal propaganda campaign in Europe and internationally against growing reaction and fascism and for the socialist solution of the decay of capitalism.

These nationalist weak and sloppy power politics moves of Stalinism must be considered in the light of her world position after this war. If the Soviet Union was as weak as in 1917 we could understand these frightful moves even though we would condemn them and even though under Lenin and Trotsky no such dilly-dally false moves were made. Today however, the Soviet Union is the number two country emerging out of the war destruction. Only the United States is capable of challenging her might. This favorable post war position of the Soviet Union RELATIVE to decay world capitalism, even though there are weak and negative factors at work within the Soviet Union, (such as the need to rebuild 90 billions in wealth destroyed by war) is not the result of Stalinist policies. It is the result of the strength of the nation, of the workers and peasants organized on the basis of transition economy, rather than capitalist economy. Just as one can say that in spite of all the blunders of Truman's gang of Wall Street servants the United States still remains the strongest nation on earth, so the Soviet Union is in its present relatively favorable position despite Stalinism and its treacherous policy.

The United States and the Soviet Union are the two most powerful countries in spite of the blunders and Truman and Stalinism.

#### INEVITABLE CONFLICT

The Soviet Union and the United States are the only two countries that have extended their geographic position to new areas. The United States has now made the Pacific an American lake and has extended her front from Manila to the Asiatic mainland and has become the watchdog of capitalism in the European waters with her powerful navy, to say nothing of her land forces throughout the world and the Almighty Dollar.

On the other hand the Soviet Union has extended her borders to include important and large areas in Europe and Asia where she upholds puppet governments. The extension of the October Revolution has taken on a peculiar form and a warped form in parts of Finland, Poland and Rumania as well as Estonia, Latvia and the Asiatic area rewon from Japan. Nevertheless it is the extension of the base of the October Revolution and part and parcel of the development of the struggle between world capitalism and a workers order.

A new round of small wars and large revolutions are in the making as a prelude to either the victory of socialism or a new third world war and an open attack on the Soviet Union. These two possible variants most likely will be combined as a complex single variant. In our next article we will take up the question of Revolution and the so-called third world war.

10-12-46

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#### NOTE

The Revolutionary Workers League has no connection with a group of individuals who publish a glorified trade union sheet known as "Labor Views" in Chicago. This group consists of a few workers who split from the Chicago Unit of the League on "localist, economist" positions. Material dealing with the political issues will appear in early issues.

# FRENCH TROTSKYIST CONGRESS

(We publish below excerpts from a report on the Congress of the French Trotskyites. A number of lessons should be noted from the report. First that it is possible for a small group to increase its membership by 4,000% in a pre-revolutionary period. Secondly that on the basis of a firm Marxian program the growth would be even more phenomenal. Third that Trotskyism, while making organizational progress, continues its role as a left tail to bourgeois democracy and in support of bourgeois democratic governments. The new espousal of a "workers and peasants" government is no different in content - although it has minor differences in form - from the old slogan of CP-SP-CGT government.)

Seven months after their 2nd Congress, the French Trotskyists held their 3rd Congress in Paris from September 7-10. 150 delegates holding 103 mandates and representing most of the regions of France attended.

Starting with five groups the Congress boiled down to two nearly equal major and one minor grouping: 1 - the new majority (former minority) with 52 mandates led by Geoffroy, Crepau, Damaziere; 2 - the old majority with 46 mandates led by Marcoux, Frank, Marin; 3 - a tiny group with 4 mandates led by Guerin.

In the seven months separating the 2nd from the 3rd Congress the Trotskyists came out of hiding and increased publication of a legal "La Verite" until today their paper probably reaches 50,000 copies weekly, a majority of which are sold, about 1/5 to 1/3 distributed freely.

From an almost total lack of organization during the war when "La Verite" of September 13 states they had then about 30 members, today the French Trotskyists have some 1,200 members.

Part of the Left Opposition to 1933, the French Trotskyists created a Communist League from 1933-35, then broke into two groups, proclaimed the 4th International with others, went into the Socialist Party and 2nd International but were driven out, went in again and were driven out again, declared the 4th International existed again. Its two groups, POI and PCI fused in 1943 with the Group Octobre. At one time the French Trotskyists even entered Marceau Pivert's PSOP (Workers and Peasants' Party), since disappeared.

With members in the Unions, the Trotskyists participated in the postal, printing and some other strikes, and have a left wing fraction in the Grade School Teachers Union. In a "Front Ouvrier" with left Socialists, Anarchists and others, the Trotskyists helped create Le Comite National de Greve in the July-August Postal strike; but the Party has little influence in the Trade Unions. Leaders of Le Comite National de Greve who were tied politically to support of a SP-CP-CGT government capitulated to government promises before the Postal strike could have become the most significant breach in Stalinist leadership of the CGT since the Congress of Limoges, and could have led an open strike struggle against the government. Worse still, Le Comite in calling off the Postal strike betrayed their mandate from the postal workers to continue the initial token 10-hour strike when they called off the strike without consulting the Postal rank and file.

In their election campaign for a "million votes," the Trotskyists received 45,000 votes which one delegate correctly reports "has no precedent in the history of the

Trotskyists movement." In the May 5 vote on the referendum and the Constitution however, the Party had taken the position of "oui" which the 3rd Congress confirmed. Though a minority were for "non" and a tiny few for writing in a blank ballot against both "oui" and "non" (like Guerin) and even for boycott, the Trotskyists failed to distinguish their vote from that of the Stalinists.

#### THE NEW POLICY

Though new and old majorities differ over characterization of the post-war period, there is very little difference over basic political approach. The old majority which had led the Party with the slogan "SP-CP-CGT government to power" now explains that such a government can become "a workers and peasants government" only by a "rupture of the governmental coalition with the bourgeois parties."

Guerin says this slogan of SP-CP-CGT government is "confusionist," that it breeds "illusions," that the position of "oui" in the referendum "has been the logical consequence of this slogan and that it constituted in sum a workers front with the traitor parties on their program."

Rejecting the old slogan of a "SP-CP-CGT government which was the formula of the second congress," the new majority raises the slogan of a "workers and peasants' government supported on the armed masses and organized in committees." Such a government it calls "a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat." However despite its characterization of the period as one of bourgeois political and economic stabilization with Stalinist and Socialist aid, the new majority offers no political reason for rejecting the slogan of SP-CP-CGT government and its replacement by increased emphasis on the united front to expedite rupture of the coalition with the bourgeois parties towards creation of a "workers and peasants government."

Both new and old majorities support the "constitutional program" of "democratic" demands: single, sovereign assembly, revocable and elected, with proportional representation; suppression of church schools and state control of all schools. One delegate, Mestre, declares that since the working class is not ready to take the power today "we must defend what is valuable in bourgeois democracy."

There is no sign in writing that the new majority disagrees with the old majority's "democratic" demands: election of magistrates and all judicial, military and administrative organs; dissolution of the army, of the police, of the garde mobile; arming of the people (not just the workers!); military instruction of workers "under trade union control" and "reconstitution of the gardes civiques."

The "gardes civiques" formerly called "garde civique republicaine" or "milice patriotique" was formed by the Stalinists within the bourgeois controlled liberation movement during the last stages of the war. At that time the Trotskyists called the "milice patriotique" the embryo of workers armed power; now they are for its reconstitution.

Military instruction under trade union control can mean only control by Franchon and the Stalinists who dominate the CGT. Guerin alone is calling for creation of "workers self-defense groups," at the same time in his speeches rejects military instruction under Trade Union control and orally calls for military training "under the control of grade school teachers" ("sous le controle des instituteurs"). Class will now begin! Once the Trotskyists started supporting the French state schools, Professor Guerin has a natural development of the idea.

Chief feature of the Congress is great emphasis on the United Front by the new majority as "the best means to show the workers...that its program is the only correct one." It calls for "linking each demand to the transitional program; to place in the forefront workers control as the best means of guaranteeing the advantages acquired in undermining bourgeois power."

All three groups accept "workers control" and "nationalization." While criticizing the majority and minority ("nationalizations do not change the structure of the bourgeois state") Guerin declares that the slogan for "nationalization without compensation" cannot be raised in general but only in specific cases and that even then: "It can in no case be separated from the slogan of workers control." Essentially the Party supports nationalization "with prudence." (NOTE: To clarify its attitude, the French Catholic Church published its support of nationalization "without excesses"). None of the three groups indicates how workers control can mean anything so long as the bourgeois state stands.

#### ONE DAY ON THE SOVIET UNION

On the USSR new and old majorities were so evenly divided and their ranks so intertwined that rather than risk a rupture at the 3rd Congress, a discussion period was opened and the entire question was delayed for six months to the next world congress of the IVth International.

Geoffroy of the new majority defended the official position: "In practice the difference with those who defended the thesis of the 'social revolution' is reduced therefore to a purely terminological dispute. In times of 'peace' in effect the task of the revolutionary overthrow of Stalin knows no adjournment. It is constantly on the order of the day. In times of 'war' or rather in times of direct military action against the USSR by one or several capitalist states, entirely conducting our revolutionary propaganda against Stalin, while entirely demonstrating to the masses the necessity for his overthrow, we postpone this task for the 'following, nearest possible stage' (Trotsky)."

In a world where the next war will apparently be between the SU and US imperialism, Geoffroy dares to call defense or defeat of the USSR a "purely terminological dispute." With his postponement of the revolution against Stalin, the strategy of class struggle during war and peace is subordinated to and replaced by military actions; two entirely different strategies, one for war, another for peace replace the permanent revolution; out the window goes the political revolution against Stalinism. In its place is "conditional defense" which means the real strategy is support ("critical") of Stalinism during war.

Opposing defense of the SU, Montal says: "Neither capitalist nor socialist nor even in motion towards one of these two forms, the soviet economy presents a new historic type." A third decisive class in addition to bourgeoisie and proletariat lurks behind his conception. Instead of a state representing and being the instrument of a class, the class, the bureaucracy and the state become an identity in this confused conception.

Calling the SU "bureaucratic imperialism," Guerin apparently opposes defense: "The politics of the USSR in effect resemble more and more that of imperialist countries." He cites Iran where a joint Irano-Soviet Oil company was built in which the SU possesses 51% of the control and extracts 51% of the profits.

## GUERIN AND INTERNATIONALISM

In one of his speeches Guerin showed how "left" he is. He called for having a general conference of the IVth International to bring together the two Trotskyist groups in the US; the tiny second Trotskyist Group in France (L'Union Communiste which publishes "Lutte de Classe"); and the Italian Partito Comunista Internazionalista (Bordighist), admitted by Guerin to be stronger than the French Trotskyists (it has over 4,000 members); and others.

Since the Bordighist Party participated in the June 2 elections in Italy and participated in the trade union struggle, Guerin stated it "has no divergences with the Trotskyists." Obviously he has not read either the Italian Bordighist's "Battaglia Communista" or "Prometeo" or even the irregularly published Trotskyist Italian version of the "IV International." Where the Bordighists denounced the Italian Republic, the Italian Trotskyist press called for voting for the Republic and for the United Front with the Stalinists who are part of the Italian government.

How Guerin imagines that defensists and defeatists in re the SU can remain in one IV International is one of the deeper mysteries of French politics. This Guerin concept based on the general Trotskyist orientation towards unity and more unity on minimum programs has widespread currency in their organization. Sometimes it is put a little differently: The task, say these people, is to build a new First International to include, as did the First International, all groups to the left of the Stalinists and the right wing Socialists, on a general program which will not offend too many people. The thesis fails to recognize that the historical period is different with capitalism no longer progressive, that even in Marx's time the anarchists already had to be excluded from a Workers International. After the collapse of the 2nd and 3rd Internationals, there can be no going back to Internationals with minimum programs with obviously diverse tendencies.

## WHICH WAY FRENCH TROTSKYISM?

The 3rd Congress reveals that none of the fundamental tenets of Trotskyism is in any danger of change.

Rejection of the seven month old Second Congress slogan of "SP-CP-CGT government to power" and its replacement by the slogan of breaking the SP-CP-CGT coalition with the bourgeois parties to form a "Workers and Peasants Government" signifies no political change. Despite a large French peasant population it is not possible to tear this slogan out of its historical milieu in backward countries and declare a "Workers and Peasants Government" applies to an advanced, industrial country like imperialist France. This is nothing but the old Bandler (1923) form of left-capitalist government.

During the May 5 referendum the Trotskyists were indistinguishable from the Stalinists. In the coming elections the Trotskyists will again be indistinguishable from the Stalinists.

A.

# THE GREAT AMERICAN MYTH

One of the most difficult problems facing Mr. John Doe is the task of obtaining the truth about his standard of living. He is bombarded on all sides with superiority complex arguments, and therefore, highly resents anyone telling him that his standard of living is low for his productive ability. This myth is fed to him by and for the interest of the powerful financial monopolists who dominate the life of the country. It is a propaganda war carried on to keep John Doe and his brothers misinformed in the name of a free press.

The lower middle class and the upper layers of the working class are the most loyal exponents of the monopolist myth about high standard of living. The skilled craftsman and layers of professional workers and the labor agents of the bosses in the worker's ranks all profit by siding in with the monopolists.

When John Doe looks to the government agencies for guidance he finds columns of figures that are more misleading than clarifying. Different government agencies issue different figures for the same problem. Economists use these figures to twist them into all shapes and for all purposes, for anything but clarity. But no matter how skillful these lying propagandists are the high standard of living can only remain a myth for the majority of the American people.

A Federal Reserve Board survey shows that more than 50 per cent of all the families in the United States are forced to exist on annual incomes of less than two thousand dollars a year. Over 23 per cent of the American families must try to live on less than one thousand dollars a year. We know that these John Doe's and their families are not counted among the 400.

How can anyone talk about a high American standard of living when over 50 per cent of the families eke out an existence on less than two thousand a year at present inflationary prices? Several reputable committees have established budgets of from three to four thousand dollars per year as the requirements of a family of four just to live at the level of decency. If they want a few extra things in life the wage earners of the family must bring home more money than the above figures. But these figures are about twice as high as the yearly wages obtained by the majority of families. These ratios are based upon present day "high" wages and present inflationary prices.

Another fact to be added to the problem which will reveal more moth holes in the high standard cloak of respectability is the question of savings. We hear so much talk about the big war plant earnings and the great amount of war bonds and war savings the workers and returned G.I.'s have stored up as a nest egg. But fact again dispel this mirage. No one can deny that the savings of the American people has increased enormously during the war. But to have money in the banks and in war bonds and to say that this belongs to the American people is preposterous.

The Federal Reserve Board figures reveal that 12 million families were unable to save even a red penny during the war. These figures also reveal that over 50 per

cent of the families were only able to save 3.5 per cent of the national savings; while less than 10 per cent of the families hold 60 per cent of the savings and war bonds. The redemption of war bonds is so enormous that this lower 50 per cent of the families have already used up their war savings.

Even more light can be thrown on the problem if we see where Mr. John Doe fits into the picture of profits and wages during and after the war period. After the deduction of high war and excess taxes the profits of the American industries from 1940 to 1945 was over 250 per cent above the pre-war level. On the other hand, production in the same period had increased by 22%, and the number of hours of work per worker had increased. But the increased MONEY wage in the same period could not keep pace with the increased cost of living. The REAL wages of the workers declined as war profits, production and working hours increased.

Let us again recall that our figures are NOT based upon the highly skilled craft workers who are the minority of the population. Our figures are based upon the earnings of the majority of families, the more than 50 per cent, who are excluded from the high standard of living enjoyed by the middle class layers, the skilled craftsman and the labor agents of the capitalists.

A check-up on the cost of living figures will round this picture out and explode the great American myth:

The Bureau of Labor Statistic claims a 32.8 per cent rise in the cost of living since 1939.

The War Production Board claims a cost of living rise of 52.3 per cent since 1939.

The Department of Agriculture figures reveal a 62.5 per cent rise in the same period.

The A.F. of L.-C.I.O. special committee presents a 62.5 per cent increase.

The most unfair figures (to state the case mildly) are presented by the Bureau of Labor, which is supposed to look after the workers welfare. For example, the Bureau of Labor figures obtain this 32.8 per cent rise by listing the rent increases as 3.9 per cent over this period. This is such a brazen lie that over 51 per cent of the American families can be witness to the fact of a far greater rent rise since 1939. The rest of their figures is also false. The Bureau of Labor figures are an insult to the returning G.I.'s and American workers.

Furthermore these figures do not take into consideration many variable factors that cannot be measured in price fluctuation of commodities. In the cost of living factors these following variable factors must be considered:

- 1- The deterioration of the quality of commodities.
- 2- Scarcity or absence of low priced commodities.
- 3- Necessity to purchase expensive substitutes for those not obtained.
- 4- Black market prices.
- 5- Housing shortage causing an increased number of daily and weekly rates.
- 6- Housing shortage which shifts repairs and upkeep on tenants.
- 7- The boycott of big business and its sit-down strike against the OPA. It has disorganized production and is withholding commodities from the retail markets.
- 8- The list of commodities selected by the Labor Department to obtain its cost of living index does not reveal a true picture for the majority of families.
- 9- The list of cities selected by the Labor Department to obtain its cost of living index does not reveal the whole picture.
- 10- The increased taxes paid by each family per year are not considered.
- 11- The war and post war adjustments and housing shortage causing increased travelling by workers, soldiers and their families.

It can be shown that even the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O. figures are conservative and do not take into consideration all of the important factors. The labor union economists were also duped by the "rules" laid down by the exploiters' false methods of statistical analysis.

After all is said and done the cost of living index means next to nothing for the 50 per cent of the families earning less than two thousand dollars in yearly wages. So long as the distribution of the wealth of production is organized as it is, the fight for a lower cost of living and the consumers fight for price control and lower prices is so much wasted energy that can result in no gains of importance. Only when labor, through its unions, at the point of production forces through wage increases and a sliding scale directly hooked up to the cost of living index can there be some real immediate demand gains that are lasting. And on this basis the cost of living index must establish a fair (statistical method) set of rules, so the actual rise can be obtained each month and not the fake cost of living index that is bantered around now.

10-1-46

Note: Any reader who desires more details on the quotations presented may obtain information by writing to the editors of the publication.

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# CHANGES IN BRITISH EMPIRE

Strange things are going on in the British Empire these days. Chinese and Indian residents of Malaya have now been given the right to become citizens and participate in the legislative counsels.

Britain has offered independence to India and its troops will soon - presumably - withdraw from Egypt.

According to reports Ceylon is to have "virtual self-government" in internal affairs. The electorate in Burma is being tripled. Negro representation in East Africa is being greatly increased. For the first time in history a majority of the legislature on the Gold Coast of Africa will be native.

The "Labor" government in Britain has issued a directive to "keep wealth in the colonies by altering the allocation of taxes."

On the surface these changes in the British Empire indicate to those who wish to shut their eyes, and look no further than surface phenomena, an end to British Imperialism. The "Labor" government, we are supposed to believe has decided to liquidate all the horrible vices and the rigid oppression of British Imperialism. Actually, however, the "Labor" government is nothing but a more capable watchdog of British Imperialism. It is fully cognizant of the realities of the situation and it knows full well that the old imperialist policy cannot longer sustain the Empire in the present period. The men and women of the British Colonial Empire have just gone through a war. The men have been in armies, those who did not fight in the war itself at least armed themselves and participated either in a Japanese or British partisan movement. Mr. Attlee recognizes full well that the people in Burma, Malaya, Africa and India are not only indignant against the abuses of the Empire, but their indignation has taken on an organized form. Nationalism is more rampant in the colonies today than ever before, and what is more, the natives are ARMED.

## NOT ENOUGH TROOPS AVAILABLE

Obviously in the light of these things some concessions must be made. To police this whole area would require ten or fifteen million troops and a terrific expenditure in money. Furthermore Britain does not have either the soldiers or the money to spare for such tasks.

Andrew Roth, an expert on the British Empire, wrote recently that "with its factories undermanned it (the British Empire) cannot spare soldiers to suppress colonial uprising, nor does its economic situation, which now dictates a life of shabby austerity for the masses of its people, permit the financing of such undertakings."

If the "Labor" government, therefore, makes a few concessions, they are obviously dictated by the explosive circumstances in the colonies themselves. But the concessions themselves have been exceedingly niggardly and in most cases meaningless. For instance, half of the legislature in Malaya is still appointed. The Ceylonese self-government merely means that they police their own "criminals." The representation in the various legislatures for the colonials is meaningless for the simple reason that all the legislature is merely advisory in nature. The Secretary of State for colonies can dissolve any law in any of these countries, and the Governor General can veto any act of the legislatures.

The Labor Party apologists have proclaimed that this is a program of "gradualism", that at the end of the horizon looms freedom and dominion status for all the British Colonies, that the capitalist yoke will be eliminated. This is sheer bunk, however. The Labor Party policy in all the colonies is clearly dictated by Dutch Shell Oil Company, Imperial Chemicals, Unilever, and many others.

#### FROM ONE POCKET TO ANOTHER

Here is one example, for instance of how the Labor party policy works. The Government loaned 87 million pounds to Burma recently. This was supposed to be a gratuitous gesture to the colonial people. When looked at more closely however, it becomes obvious that the overwhelming portion of that 87 million pounds loan will go to the British firms, Steel Brothers limited, who will now use this money to reestablish their monopoly in the cotton, rice and teak industries of Burma. Imperialism evidently still reigns.

The Labor Party is apologizing to the masses in England for this unvarnished aid to the old imperial monopolies. The excuse is being used that "we need foreign exchange." Such an excuse, however, can obviously cover every sin on the horizon. The unvarnished fact is that the imperialist policy of Great Britain has been modified considerably to meet the new needs of the times. But its basic predatory character still remains.

American Imperialism long ago discovered that it is much cheaper to humble and control the native populations with fine words and economic penetration than with the sword. America controls Brazil, Cuba, Peru, Mexico, Phillipine Islands and fifty other countries throughout the globe merely on the basis of economic penetration and their puppets. This method is cheaper and more effective. It makes it possible to cloak imperialism in high-fallutin words such as "independence". America too points to its "independence" for the Phillipines as sign that it is not imperialistic. Certainly the United States is tickled pink to give the Phillipines its independence now when the Phillipine peasants, particularly those in the interior, are on the verge of revolution. It is well known that the Phillipine economy could not exist for five minutes without the hundreds of millions in loans that America is giving to the puppet government in the Phillipines today. It would take a half million American troops at least to police the Phillipine Islands in their present state of "disorder." Wall Street, therefore, finds a convenient device of permitting the native bourgeoisie to police its own oppressed infinitely cheaper than the policy of direct intervention.

To this policy the British Empire now turns belatedly. We shall unquestionably hear much more in the future about the "end of imperialism." Every revolutionist will know, however, that imperialism, far from diminishing in scope is becoming broader and infinitely more vicious; that the new cloaks are being put on merely to hide the basic character of this imperialism and to effectively mobilize - they hope - a thoroughly disgusted and disillusioned citizenry to preparation for more and more predatory wars.